

Message Text

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71

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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R 041637 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 945

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 5200

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJECT: CHANGES IN SOVIET POLITBURO

REF: A. JIC(A) (73) (SA) 41. B. STATE 80144. C. MOSCOW 4854

1. REFERENCE WHICH HAS BEEN POUCHED TO THE DEPARTMENT IS THE OFFICIAL BRITISH ASSESSMENT OF THE RECENT CHANGES IN THE SOVIET POLITBURO. OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH FCO SOVIET DEPARTMENT INDICATED THAT BRITISH ARE SOMEWHAT MORE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT CHANGES THAN REFS B AND C. FEELING IN LONDON IS THAT ELEVATION OF THREE POWERFUL MINISTERS WAS RATHER SEVERE PRICE TO PAY FOR SHELEST AND VORONOV. BRITISH FEAR THAT ALTHOUGH BREZHNEV MAY HAVE ACHIEVED TEMPORARY ENDORSEMENT FOR HIS DETENTE POLICIES, FOR LONGER TERM FOREIGN POLICY WOULD BE MORE INFLUENCED BY NEW COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP WHICH WOULD BE ABLE TO MORE EFFECTIVELY LIMIT BREZHNEV INITIATIVES.

2. FCO OFFICIALS FELT THAT EMPHASIS ON SOCIALIST SOLIDARITY, ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND MAINTENANCE OF WARSAW PACT STRENGTH WERE IMPORTANT POINTS LENDING PESSIMISTIC NOTE TO RESULTS OF PLENUM.

3. COMMENT: DURING RECENT DISCUSSION OF POLITBURO
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CHANGES WE HAD WITH CZECH FIRST SECRETARY, HE MADE INTERESTING COMMENT THAT ELEVATION OF THREE POWERFUL MINISTERS WAS BREZHNEV' S METHOD OF RETAINING POWER AS THESE MINISTERS OFFSET ONE ANOTHER, THEREFORE NULLIFYING ANY THREAT ONE OF THEM MAY BE TO BREZHNEV SUPREMACY. ROMANIAN FIRST SECRETARY WHO IS CLOSE TO FORMER ROMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER MANESCU OBSERVED THAT MANESCU HAD TOLD HIM BREZHNEV HAS RELIED HEAVILY ON GROMYKO IN FOREIGN POLICY FORMULATION SINCE 1968.

4. WE ARE POUCHING COPY OF REF A TO MOSCOW.
SOHM

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NMAFVVZCZ

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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